

DRAFT

J. N. “Turkey” Kearn

Memorial Conservation Area

Ten-Year Area Management Plan

FY 2016-2025



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OVERVIEW

- **Official Area Name:** J. N. "Turkey" Kearn Memorial Conservation Area, #7717
- **Year of Initial Acquisition:** 1977
- **Acreage:** 1,674 acres
- **County:** Johnson, Pettis
- **Division with Administrative Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Division with Maintenance Responsibility:** Wildlife
- **Statements of Purpose:**

A. Strategic Direction

Maintain existing habitat communities and develop additional wildlife habitat through active management. Manage forests, woodlands, grasslands, crop fields, and old fields to enhance a variety of natural communities. Maintain riparian zones and watersheds to ensure water quality. Provide public recreational and educational opportunities compatible with the area's resources.

B. Desired Future Condition

The future desired condition of the J. N. "Turkey" Kearn Memorial Conservation Area (Kearn Memorial CA) is high quality forest and woodland communities with managed open lands, i.e., native warm-season grass/forb communities, crop fields, and glades. Riparian zones and lake watersheds will be managed to provide optimal protection for the aquatic resources.

C. Federal Aid Statement

N/A

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CONDITIONS

I. Special Considerations

- A. Priority Areas:** Hi Ridge Conservation Opportunity Area (Units #2, #3), Prairie Chicken Focus Area (Units #2, #3), Crooked Creek Aquatic Conservation Area (Unit #1)
- B. Natural Areas:** None

II. Important Natural Features and Resources

- A. Species of Conservation Concern:** Species of conservation concern are known from this area. Area Managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- B. Caves:** None
- C. Springs:** None

III. Existing Infrastructure

- 11 parking lots (Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible)
- 3 lake dams and spillways
- 1 concrete boat ramp (ADA accessible)
- 1 fishing dock (ADA accessible)
- 1 floating boat dock (ADA accessible)
- South Lake fishing lake (9.0 acres)
- North Lake fishing lake (25.0 acres)
- Shop Lake fishing lake (1.5 acres)
- 20 fishless ponds (3.0 acres)
- 1 pesticide storage shed
- 1 grain storage bin
- 1 privy (ADA accessible)
- 1 residence
- 1 shop/storage building
- 1 storage building

IV. Area Restrictions or Limitations

- A. Deed Restrictions or Ownership Considerations:** None
- B. Federal Interest:** Federal funds may be used in the management of this land. Fish and wildlife agencies may not allow recreational activities and related facilities that would interfere with the purpose for which the State is managing the land. Other uses may be acceptable and must be assessed in each specific situation.
- C. Easements:** Phillips 66 Pipeline LLC natural gas pipeline, Pan Handle Eastern Pipeline Co. petroleum pipeline (Figure 2)
- D. Cultural Resources:** Yes, records kept with Missouri Department of Conservation (Department) Environmental Compliance Specialist. Managers should follow Best Management Practices for Cultural Resources found in the Department Resource Policy Manual.
- E. Hazards and Hazardous Materials:** None
- F. Endangered Species:** Endangered species are known from this area. Area managers should consult the Natural Heritage Database annually and review all management activities with the Natural History Biologist.
- G. Boundary Issues:** None

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

V. Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Open land habitat consists of crop fields, cool- and warm-season grass/forb plantings and old fields. The area contains approximately 1,213 acres of open land habitat. Small field size and close juxtaposition provide excellent habitat for nesting and brood rearing for a variety of birds and other open-land dependent species.
- 2) Woodland and forest habitat on the area is 423 acres. No past management activities are known for any of these units.

Management Objective 1: Maintain and enhance existing forest and woodland communities.

Strategy 1: Implement appropriate forest management, as warranted. (Forestry)

Management Objective 2: Implement and maintain beneficial riparian corridor practices, as outlined in the Department's Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines for Lands and Waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation (Missouri Department of Conservation 2009).

Strategy 1: Utilize Best Management Practices during timber harvest and woodland management as described in the Department's manuals: Missouri Watershed Protection Practice manual (Missouri Department of Conservation 2014) and the Missouri Forest Management Guidelines Voluntary Recommendations for Well-managed Forests. (Missouri Department of Conservation 2014) (Forestry)

Strategy 2: Identify riparian corridors that need to be widened and establish appropriate vegetation using tree planting, direct seeding or allowing natural regeneration. (Forestry)

Management Objective 3: Develop and maintain grasslands.

Strategy 1: Use best management practices to establish prairie reconstruction habitat on appropriate sites. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Convert existing fescue to wildlife-friendly cool-season grasses.

Management Objective 4: Manage old fields to provide a balance of bare ground ground, warm- and cool-season grasses, annual forbs and shrubs to maintain and improve habitat.

Strategy 1: Utilize a variety of management techniques to eliminate or control undesirable grasses, provide bare ground, encourage annual forbs and promote

areas of shrubby growth. Techniques will include, but not limited to, spraying, prescribed burning, mechanical treatments woody cover removal, disking, and mowing.

Strategy 2: Control invasive species using appropriate techniques and monitor for new occurrences.

Management Objective 5: Control invasive species.

Strategy 1: Use best management practices to control and/or eradicate invasive species. (Wildlife)

VI. Aquatic Resource Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) The area is in the Muddy Creek watershed. Fourth-order Muddy Creek runs through the northwest portion of Unit #1. The Crooked Creek Aquatic Conservation Opportunity Area runs through the eastern half of Unit #1, which provides opportunity for watershed landscape management.
- 2) The area has two fishing lakes: South Lake (9 acres) and North Lake (25 acres). The fishing lakes were built in 2000. The North Lake area includes ADA-accessible docks, boat ramp and fishing jetty. The area also includes other small ponds that provide opportunity for quality angling.
- 3) The North and South Lakes are relatively shallow and have excessive aquatic vegetation, which presents a challenge in providing quality fishing.
- 4) There are numerous small fishless ponds on the area. These fishless ponds are managed as wildlife watering holes, and are not managed for fishing.

Management Objective 1: Maintain and protect healthy watersheds by implementing best management practices.

Strategy 1: Follow the Department's *Watershed and Stream Management Guidelines* (2009) and the Department's *Resource Policy Manual* to ensure management activities adhere to best management practices. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 2: Maintain and restore adequate stream corridors on area streams in order to maintain or improve water quality.

Strategy 1: Restore and establish stream corridors adjacent to management practices. (Fisheries, Forestry, and Wildlife)

Management Objective 3: Provide quality angling opportunities.

Strategy 1: Manage fishing ponds for self-sustaining populations. Assess sport fish populations as needed in North and South Lakes. Stock channel catfish, as needed. (Fisheries)

Strategy 2: Monitor aquatic vegetation, using mechanical methods and herbicides to suppress and control unwanted aquatic vegetation and nuisance species.

Control invasive species (i.e., exotic Eurasian water milfoil, American lotus, naiads, coontail and filamentous algae). Reduce exotic or invasive species to allow diverse aquatic plant communities to exist. (Fisheries)

Strategy 3: Use buffers and BMP agricultural practices that minimize the effects of nutrient and soil runoff in the watershed surrounding the North and South Lakes. (Fisheries, Forestry, and Wildlife)

VII. Public Use Management Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Balance user opportunity and minimize user conflict. (Wildlife)
- 2) Provide educational opportunities for schools, groups and individuals. (Wildlife, Forestry, and Fisheries)

Management Objective 1: Provide public hunting and viewing opportunities.

Strategy 1: Maintain area parking lots and trails. (Wildlife)

Strategy 2: Conduct routine management activities that will provide habitat for a diversity of species. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Improve educational and interpretive opportunities.

Strategy 1: Provide maps and maintain the Missouri Atlas database for public use. (Wildlife, Outreach, and Education)

Strategy 2: Work with Outreach and Education consultants in the Kansas City Region to enhance the usability of the areas for the Discover Nature Schools program. (Wildlife, Outreach and Education)

Strategy 3: North Lake offers easy bank fishing access from the main parking lot, floating dock and jetty. Encourage the use of North Lake as a site for outreach and education classes/clinics. (Fisheries)

Management Objective 3: Facilitate a good working relationship with neighboring landowners.

Strategy 1: Promote habitat management on neighboring landowner properties. (Private Land Services)

Strategy 2: Utilize Kearn Memorial CA for landowner field days or other special events. (Outreach and Education)

VIII. Administrative Considerations

Challenges and Opportunities:

- 1) Ensure all easements are properly documented and filed.
- 2) Evaluate land offered as additions to these areas.
- 3) Maintain existing infrastructure at highest possible level.

Management Objective 1: Make sure all easements are properly located.

Strategy 1: Use Geographic Information System to ensure that any easements are properly located. (Wildlife)

Management Objective 2: Maintain infrastructure at current levels.

Strategy 1: Maintain infrastructure in accordance with Department Guidelines.

Lands Proposed for Acquisition:

When available, adjacent land may be considered for acquisition from willing sellers. Tracts that improve area access, provide public use opportunities, contain unique natural communities and/or species of conservation concern, or meet other Department priorities, as identified in the annual Department land acquisition priorities, may be considered.

MANAGEMENT TIMETABLE

All strategies for this management plan are considered ongoing.

APPENDICES

Area Background:

J. N. "Turkey" Kearn Memorial Wildlife Area is located in Johnson and Pettis counties. J. N. "Turkey" Kearn, who delighted many people with his humor and knowledge of local history, lived on the area in harmony with its natural beauty. In 1976, he donated 1,479 acres to the Department with the wish that the bounty of wildlife his ancestors spoke of when they first settled here be restored and preserved for future generations. The Department purchased an additional 195 acres, bringing the area to its present size of 1,674 acres.

The area features a great variety of habitat types, including wooded hills, bottomlands, crop fields and native grass fields. Two fishing lakes, covering 9 and 25 acres, respectively, were built in 2000. The area contains several small ponds and one 2-acre pond. Muddy Creek crosses the northwest corner of the area.

Management of the area focuses on providing habitat for upland wildlife species, including deer, turkey, quail and greater prairie chickens in Unit #3.

Current Land and Water Types:

Land/Water Type	Acres	Miles	% of Area
Old Field	700.5		42
Forest	423		25
Crop	325		19
Grassland	190		12
Ponds	35.5		2
Total	1,674		100
Stream Frontage		11.62	

References:

Missouri Department of Conservation. (1998). Missouri Natural Heritage Database. *Area and resource management policies and procedures manual*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2009). *Watershed and stream management guidelines for lands and waters managed by Missouri Department of Conservation*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2010). *Forest land action strategy*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Missouri Department of Conservation.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri Forest Management Guidelines Voluntary Recommendations for Well-Managed Forests*. Jefferson City, Missouri:

Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri Jefferson City, Missouri: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Missouri Department of Conservation. (2014). *Missouri watershed protection practice recommended practices for Missouri forests: 2014 management guidelines for maintaining forested watersheds to protect streams*. Jefferson City, Missouri: Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

Maps:

Figure 1: Area Map

Figure 2: Habitat Cover Map

Figure 3: Aerial Map of Units 1 and 2

Figure 4: Aerial Map of Unit 3

Figure 1: Area Map

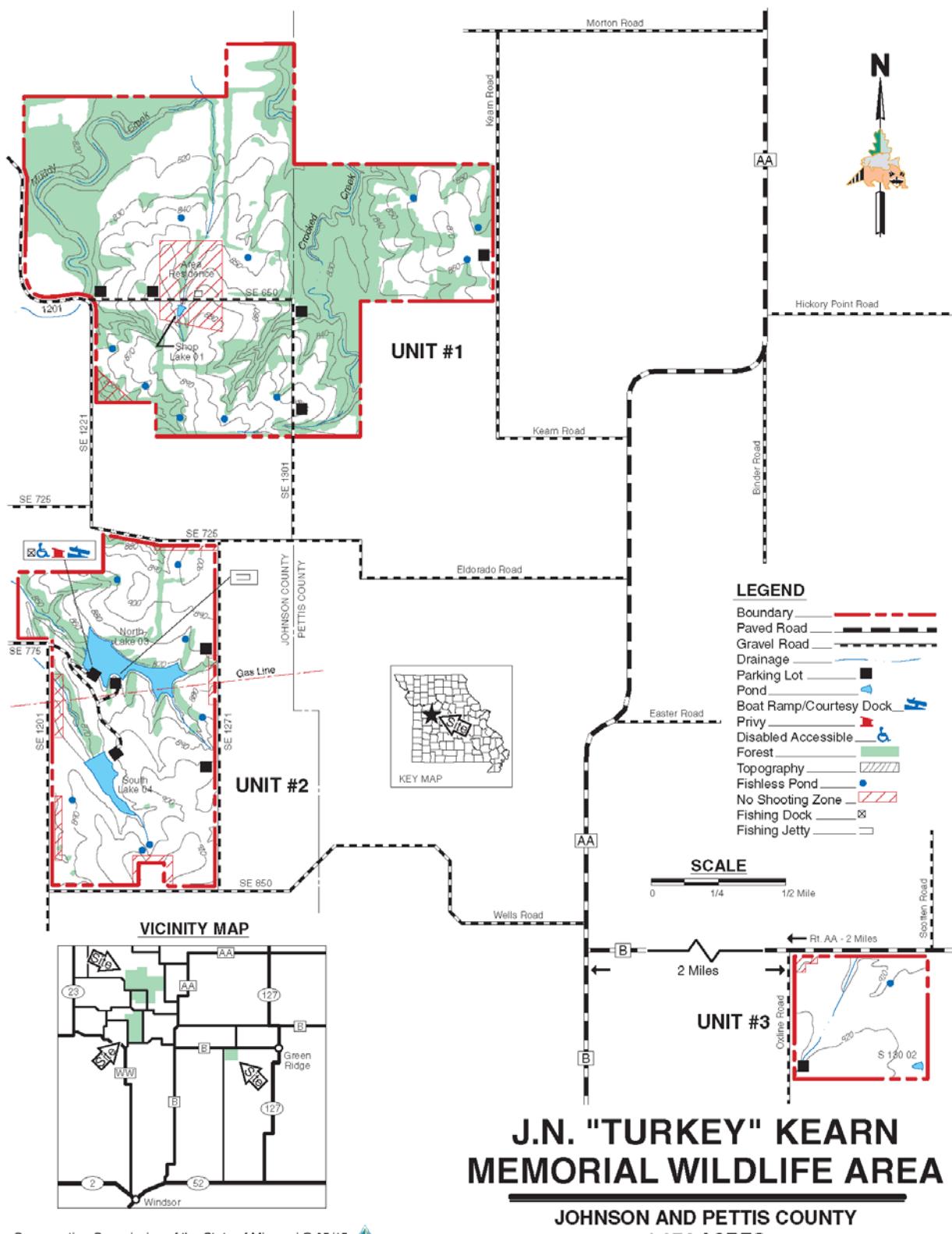


Figure 2: Habitat Cover Map

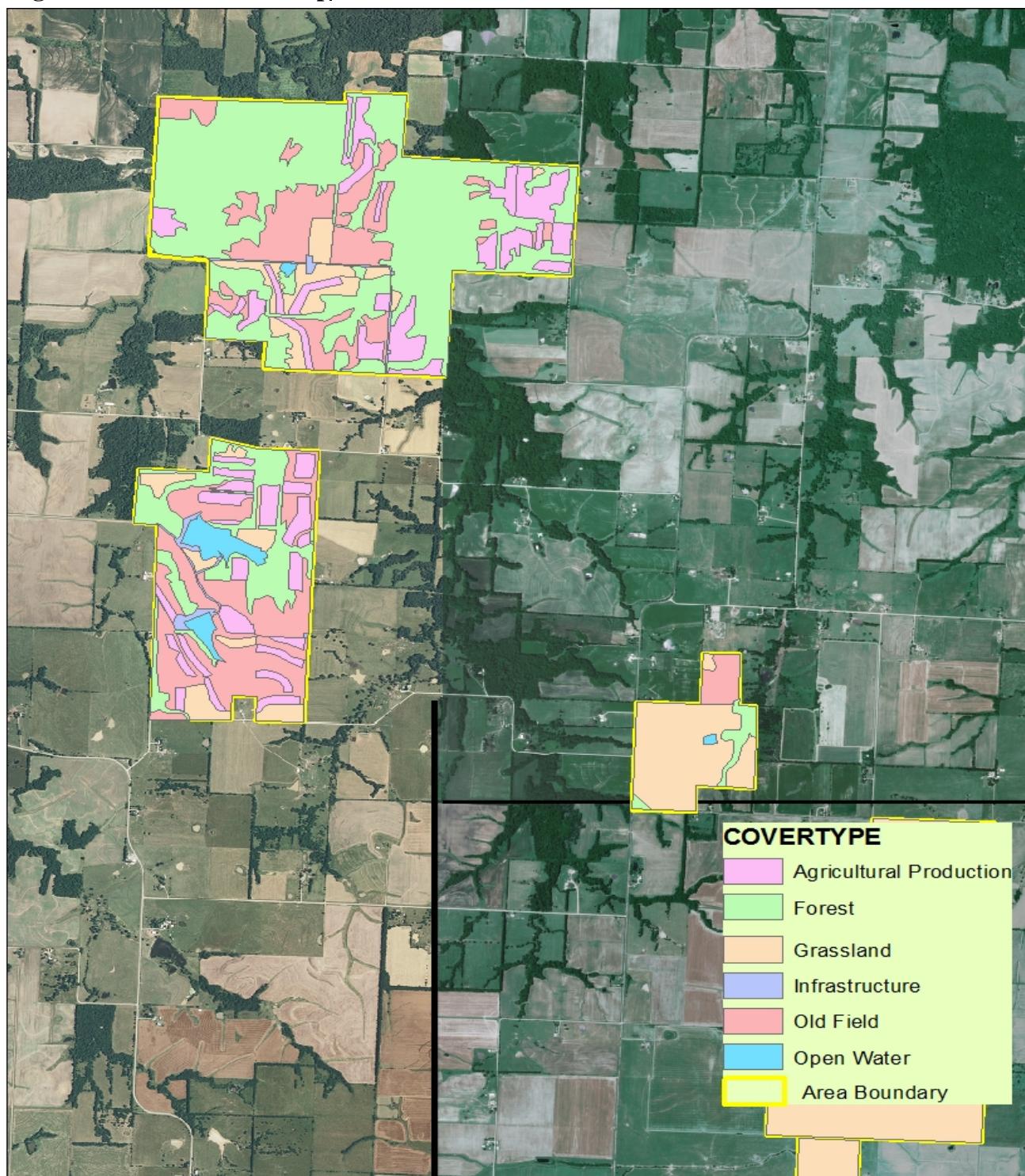


Figure 3: Aerial Map of Units 1 and 2

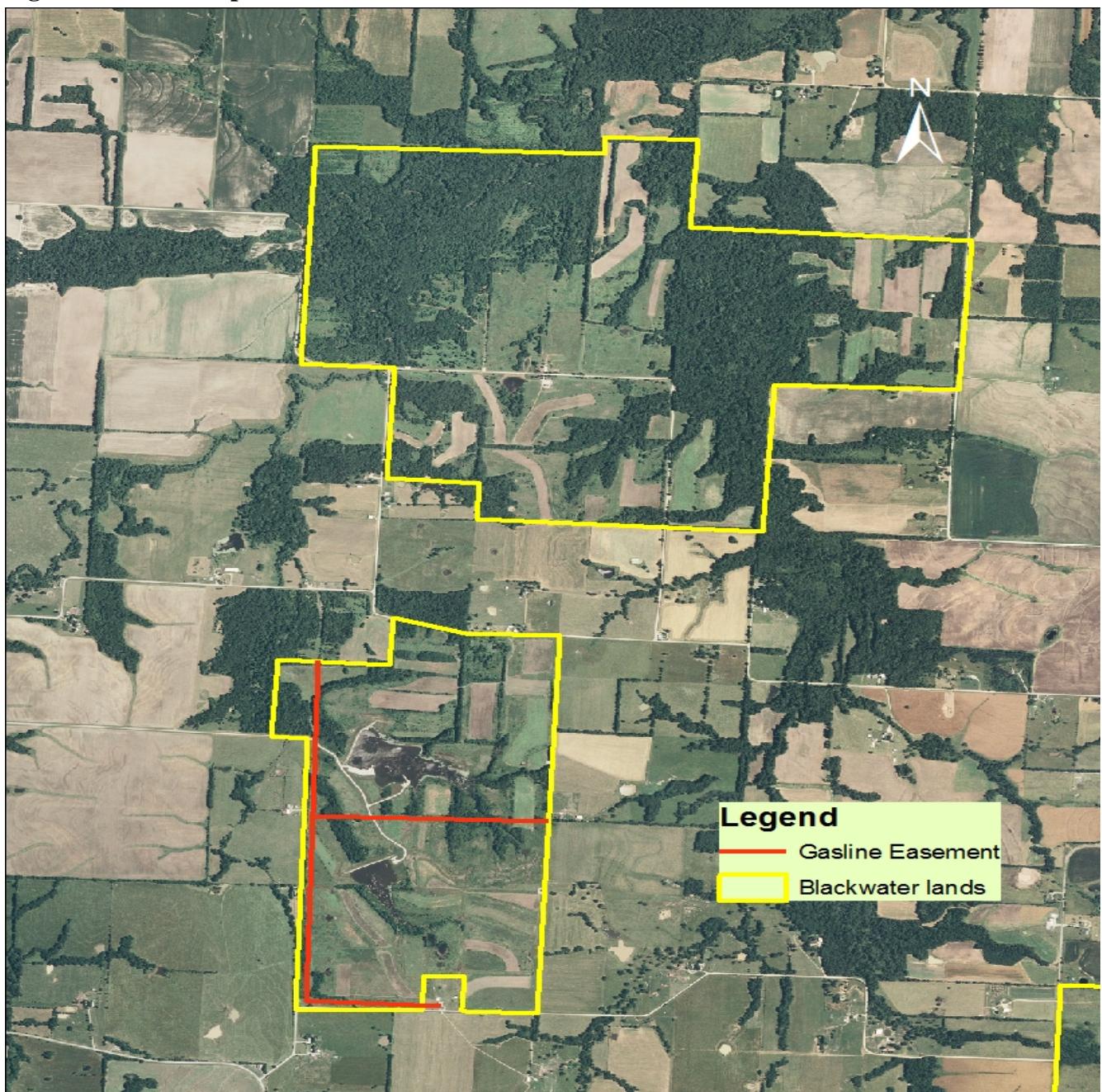


Figure 4: Aerial Map of Unit 3



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